

# **Hampden County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls**

## **BYLAWS**

Updated – April 2019

### **PREAMBLE**

Pursuant to Clauses F & G of Subsection 4 of Section 66 of Chapter 3 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the organization and rules of procedure of the Hampden County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls shall be as follows:

### **ARTICLE I – NAME**

The name of this organization shall be the Hampden County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls.

### **ARTICLE II – PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Commission shall be to advance women and girls toward full equity in all areas of life and to promote rights and opportunities for all women and girls. The mission of the Hampden County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls is to provide a permanent, effective voice for women and girls across Hampden County that facilitates and fosters community and inclusiveness among women. The Commission stands for fundamental freedoms, basic human rights and the full enjoyment of life for all women and girls throughout their lives. The Commission shall have the following responsibilities:

- a) Study, review and report on the status of women and girls in the county;
- b) Inform leaders of business, education, health care, state and local governments and the communications media of issues pertaining to women and girls;
- c) Serve as a liaison between government and community groups concerned with issues affecting women;
- d) Serve as a clearinghouse for information on issues pertaining to women and girls;
- e) Identify and recommend qualified women for appointive positions on levels of government, business and local institutions including boards and Commissions, as the Commission deems necessary and appropriate;
- f) Address programs and practices in all state and local agencies as they affect women and girls, as the Commission deems necessary and appropriate;
- g) Consult with executive and legislative bodies on the effect on women and girls of proposed legislation, as the Commission deems necessary and appropriate;
- h) Promote and facilitate collaboration among local women and girl's organizations in Hampden County as the Commission deems necessary and appropriate; and
- i) Provide an avenue to liaison between the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women and Girls and the Hampden County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls.

### **ARTICLE III – REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

The Commission shall annually, on or before June 2, report the results of its findings and activities of the preceding year and its recommendations to the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women and Girls.

### **ARTICLE IV – POWERS OF THE COMMISSION**

The powers of the Commission shall include but not be limited to the following:

- a) To advise and submit recommendations and policies to the legislature and agencies, and officers of the state and local subdivisions of government on issues relating to women and girls;
- b) To collaborate with concerned organizations, groups and state departments on issues of common concern using such voluntary and uncompensated services of private individuals, as may be needed;
- c) To enact bylaws for its own governance;
- d) To hold regular, public meetings and to hold fact-finding hearings and other public forms as it may deem necessary; and

The Commission may request from agencies such information and assistance as the Commission may require.

### **ARTICLE V – MEMBERS**

#### **SECTION 1. FOUNDING MEMBERS**

The initial members of the Hampden County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls shall be appointed for random one, two and three year terms. Members shall be appointed by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women and Girls in consultation with women’s organizations from a pool of applicants who reside in Hampden County.

#### **SECTION 2. MEMBERS**

The Hampden County Commission shall consist of nine (9) members who are to be appointed by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women and Girls.

#### **SECTION 3. DIVERSITY**

Members of the Commission shall be drawn from diverse racial, ethnic, religious, age, sexual orientation, and socio-economic backgrounds from throughout Hampden County and shall have had experience working toward the improvement of the status of women and girls in society.

#### **SECTION 4. TERMS OF OFFICE**

A Member shall serve a term of three (3) years duration and until her successor is appointed. (The Exception of these terms are the original members of the Hampden County Commission

who will have staggered terms. See Article V Section 1.) A Member shall serve no more than two (2) terms.

**SECTION 5. VACANCIES**

Any Commissioner may resign by delivery her written resignation to the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women and Girls. The Massachusetts Commission will have the authority to fill the vacancy with a new Commissioner for the balance of the unexpired term.

**SECTION 6. APPOINTMENTS**

Recommendations for Commission appointments shall be made in consultation with women and girl’s organizations with final appointments made by the MA State Commission on the Status of Women and Girls. Nominations shall be solicited between August 1 and September 16 of each year through an open application process using a uniform application that is widely distributed throughout the county.

Appointments shall begin January 1 of each year.

**ARTICLE VI – FINANCES**

**SECTION 1. FISCAL YEAR**

The fiscal year of the Commission shall be July 1 through June 30.

**SECTION 2. FUNDING**

The Commission may accept and solicit funds, including any gifts, donations, grants or bequests, or any federal funds for any purposes of the enabling legislations.

**SECTION 3. ACCOUNTS**

Such funds shall be deposited in a separate account with the Massachusetts State Treasurer, be received by said Treasurer on behalf of the Commonwealth and expended by the Commission in accordance with the law and the donor or grantors request.

**ARTICLE VII – COMPENSATION AND LIABILITY**

**SECTION 1. COMPENSATION**

The members of the Commission shall receive no direct compensation for their services, but shall be reimbursed for any usual and customary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

**SECTION 2. LIABILITY**

No person who is now or who later becomes a member of the Commission shall be personally liable to its creditors for any indebtedness or liability, and any and all creditors of this Commission shall look to the assets of this Commission for payment.

## **ARTICLE VIII – OFFICERS**

### **SECTION 1. OFFICERS**

The Commission shall elect from among its members a Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and a Recorder, and any other officers it deems necessary. Only members of the Commission shall be eligible for nomination and election as Officers of the Commission. If an officer of this Commission shall, during her term of office, no longer be a member of the Commission, she shall automatically cease to be an officer of the Commissioner.

### **SECTION 2. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Officers shall be elected annually, at the last meeting in May of each calendar year with a starting date of July 1<sup>st</sup>. The officers shall be elected by written ballot. If there is only one nominee for each, the ballot may be dispensed with and a voice vote may be taken.

### **SECTION 3. OFFICERS' TERM OF OFFICE**

The elected officers shall serve for a term of one (1) year. The elected officers shall not serve more than two (2) successive terms in any particular office. However, under extenuating circumstances, the Commission's Chair may serve a third consecutive one-year term.

### **SECTION 4. OFFICER VACANCIES**

A vacancy in the Chair's office shall be filled until the next annual election by the Vice-Chair. All other vacancies shall be filled by a majority vote of the members of the Commission.

In the event the Chair and Vice-Chair are both unable to preside, a quorum of the Commission shall elect a temporary Chair.

## **ARTICLE IX – DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS**

The duties of the officers are as follows:

### **SECTION 1. CHAIR**

The Chair shall be entrusted to act and carry out policies and decisions of the Commission between meetings of the Commission. The Chair shall assure that the legislative mandates of the Commission are carried out as prescribed by the Legislature and as formulated in these by-laws to:

- a) Call and preside at all meetings of the Commission and conduct these in accordance with parliamentary rules;
- b) Be an ex-officio (non-voting) member of all committees with the exception of the nominating committee;
- c) Call special meetings when deemed necessary or desirable;
- d) Set the agenda for the Commission;

- e) Serve as spokesperson for the Commission or direct such representation before the public and governmental bodies. Oversee all recommendations and reports to the Massachusetts Commission.
- f) Perform such other duties as the Commission may prescribe from time to time.
- g) Sign such instruments as shall be authorized by the Commission.

## **SECTION 2. VICE-CHAIR**

The Vice-Chair shall perform all duties of the Chair in the event of the Chair's absence or inability to serve, or in the event of a vacancy in that office until it is filled and shall perform other duties as are designated by the Commission.

## **SECTION 3. TREASURER**

The Treasurer shall perform the following duties and all other duties as are designated by the Commission.

- a) Ensure that all financial records are maintained and shall oversee budget preparation and reporting.
- b) Monitor the budget and financial records on an ongoing basis and in accordance with the provisions and requirements of the law and state agencies.
- c) Present the Treasurer's report at regular Commission meetings.
- d) Strategize with the Commission as to how to apply for and receive state, local, private and/or individual grants, appropriations and/or gifts in compliance with applicable state laws and regulations in order to further the purpose of the Commission.
- e) Present an annual financial report to the Commission and the Massachusetts Commission.
- f) Perform all of the duties incident to the Office of Treasurer and such other duties as from time to time be assigned.

## **SECTION 4. RECORDER**

The Recorder shall:

- a) Be responsible for reviewing the minutes of all regular and special meetings of the Commission;
- b) Assure that copies of the minutes and of the Treasurer's financial statement to all members of the Commission and the MA Commission prior to the next meeting;
- c) Assure that an attendance roster is maintained for each Commission meeting and committee meetings;
- d) Act as historian to the Commission by assuring that all general correspondence, records of meetings and committees, and business before the Commission is maintained;
- e) Perform all other duties necessary for the maintenance of adequate records, files and communications of the Commission.

## **ARTICLE XI – COMMITTEES**

### **SECTION 1. ORGANIZATION**

The Commission may create such committees, as it deems necessary to carry out the work of the Commission.

### **SECTION 2. STANDING COMMITTEES**

The following Standing Committees shall be established as options for the Commission to utilize when needed to accomplish specific tasks. The work of the Standing Committees shall be determined by goals and objectives established by the Commission and reviewed at minimum annually.

The Standing Committees shall include but not be limited to the following:

- a) Legislative and Public Policy Committee
- b) Program and Planning Committee
- c) Technology and Social Media Committee
- d) Nominating Committee (as needed)

All Committee Chairs shall be Commissioners and the standing committees shall be composed of a minimum of three (3) Commission members.

Every Standing Committee must include a minimum of one Commissioner to serve. Committee members may volunteer to serve on the committee of their choice.

Current Commission members shall be elected by the members of the individual standing committees at their first meeting.

### **SECTION 3. SPECIAL COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES**

The Commission is empowered to appoint committees, task forces, councils, or other appropriate bodies, to study specialized areas of concern and report their findings to the Commission; disseminate information on issues relating to women and girls; develop and promote programs and services to women and girls; and advocate for women's equity.

Membership on such committees shall not be limited to Commissioners. Special representatives other than Commission members may be appointed by the Chair to serve on task forces for the period of time designated by the Commission and would submit interim reports on their special assignments as the Commission requests.

Only Commissioners may vote to elect special committee Chairs, and only Commissioners may be Chairs of special committees.

## **ARTICLE XII – MEETINGS**

### **SECTION 1. SCHEDULE**

The Commission shall meet once every month, except for the months of July and August at the members' discretion. A calendar of dates shall be set at the first meeting of the fiscal year. This calendar of dates shall be mailed to all Commissioners and can be amended by a majority vote of the Commission. The Chair shall designate the time and place of the meetings.

### **SECTION 2. QUORUM**

A majority of Commissioners currently holding office shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of Commission business.

### **SECTION 3. OPEN MEETING LAW**

All meetings shall be conducted in compliance with the Open Meeting Law. Executive sessions, as per the law, may be conducted.

### **SECTION 4. SPECIAL MEETINGS**

A special meeting of the Commission can be called by:

- a) The Chair; or
- b) A majority vote of the Commission.

The purpose of the meeting shall be stated in the call. No business can be transacted at the meeting except that stated in the call. Except in cases of emergency, at least a three (3) day notice must be given to the membership.

A special meeting can be conducted if a quorum of the Commissioners is present.

### **SECTION 6. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Observers may attend meetings of the Commission and be granted the privilege of the floor by vote of the Commission members.

Normally, fifteen minutes will be set aside at the beginning of the meetings for this purpose. In addition, visitors may speak to specific issues as they arise during the meeting at the discretion of the Chair and the Commissioners.

### **SECTION 7. ATTENDANCE**

All Commissioners are expected to maintain regular attendance at meetings of the full Commission, and to participate fully and effectively in such committees or task forces as are necessary and appropriate to conduct the business of the Commission. The Recorder of the Commission shall maintain a record of attendance at each Commission meeting.

- a) After a Commissioner's second absence from regularly-scheduled meetings within 4 months the Commission Chair shall issue a verbal and written warning to the absent Commissioner in regards to her lack of attendance.

- b) After a Commissioner's third absence from regularly-scheduled meetings within 6 months, the Commission Chair shall notify the MA Commission on the Status of Women and Girls (MCSW). MCSW shall then issue separate verbal and written warnings.
- c) After each warning has been issued, the absent commissioner has the opportunity to explain and defend her reasons for absence.
- d) If after all warnings, attendance does not improve and a fourth absence is noted during the twelve (12) months of regularly-scheduled meetings, the Commission Chair shall notify the MCSW of the failure of that Commissioner to comply with the Commission's attendance requirements. The MCSW Program and Planning Committee will review evidence and attendance records and consider potential removal.
- e) The Full MCSW shall vote on whether to approve any recommendation of removal.

### **ARTICLE XIII – VOTING PRIVILEGES**

At any Commission meeting or committee meeting, each member of the Commission shall be entitled to one vote. The Chair shall not vote except in the event of a tie. There shall be no proxy voting.

### **ARTICLE XV – AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS**

These bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the Commission by a two-thirds vote of the Commissioners present and voting provided that the proposed amendment has been submitted at the previous meeting.

### **ARTICLE XVI – POLICY ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS**

The Commission, as needed, shall adopt policies. Policies may be adopted, amended, or repealed by a majority of all votes cast by the Commissioners present and voting, provided that the proposed material has been submitted at the previous meeting.

### **ARTICLE XVII – PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY**

When not in conflict with these bylaws, Robert's Rules of Order (Newly Revised) shall govern the actions of the Commission.